

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- Identify rhythm and meter
- Scan, or mark stress patterns in, poetry to determine meter
- Analyze the effects of rhythm and meter

RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

You will need photocopies for students of:

- **Student Lesson Summary**, p. 166
- **Teaching Model**, “Fire and Ice,” 168
- **Practice Worksheets**, Levels A and B, pp. 169–170.
- **Reteaching Worksheet**, p. 171

Teach

1. **Rhythm and Meter:** Ask volunteers to recite favorite song lyrics that describe a peaceful time or place. As they recite, ask others to listen to the rhythm, or beat, of the words. Does there seem to be a regular “beat,” or rhythm? Are some words or syllables stressed? Explain that **rhythm** and **meter** in poetry are just like rhythm and meter in music, only in poetry a beat (the stressed and unstressed syllables together) is called a foot.
2. **Teaching Rhythm and Meter:** Pass out the **Lesson Summary** and guide students through the **Academic Vocabulary**. Review the purpose of **scanning** a poem (*to identify stressed and unstressed syllables, to analyze the poem’s rhythm and meter*) Present the two most common types of metrical feet: the **iamb** and **trochee**.
 - **Iamb or Iambic Foot:** Write on the board the example from “Farmer in the Dell.” Clarify that an iambic line sounds like: *I am. I am. I am!* Have a volunteer read the example and point to the line’s three stressed beats, or feet. The same student can mark the stressed syllables with strong-accent (ˈ) marks. Have another student mark the unstressed syllables with “short” (˘) marks.
 - **Trochee or Trochaic Foot.** Clarify that a trochaic line sounds like: *trochee, trochee, trochee*, or *DA-dum DA-dum DA-dum*. Compare the sound of a trochee with that of an iamb, making sure that students hear the difference. Then read aloud the example from “Mary, Mary.” Ask student volunteers to write and scan a trochaic foot on the board. Next, read aloud the example, starting with “Safe upon a rock.” Have students listen for the half-foot at the end of each line. Ask, “Why do poets often end a trochaic line with a half foot?” (*to accent the line breaks, to emphasize the word that ends the line.*)
3. **Analyzing Rhythm and Meter:** Explain that a poet often uses rhythm and meter to influence the meaning of a poem. Review the bulleted list. Then, as an example, ask how a “singsong” rhythm or meter might affect the mood or tone of a poem. Would this rhythm give a poem a feeling of gloom? Lightheartedness? Suspense? (*lightheartedness*)
4. **Guided Practice:** Distribute the **Teaching Model**, “Fire and Ice,” by Robert Frost. Work with students to scan, or mark up, the first part of the poem, as shown below. Then help them answer the questions that follow.

RHYTHM AND METER, CONTINUED

Some say | the world | will end | in fire,
Some say | in ice.
From what | I've tasted of | desire
I hold | with those | who favor fire.

- What is the metrical foot? (**iambic** —unstressed followed by stressed.)
- How many feet are in the first, third, and fourth lines? (*four*)
- How many feet are in the second line? (*two*)
- What tone does the meter give to the poem? (*Sample answer: simple, neat, and tidy, happy tone*)
- How has Frost emphasized key ideas in the poem, such as *say*, *world*, *end*, and *fire* in the first line? (*Sample answer: Frost used **stressed** syllables to emphasize these words.*)
- Why might Frost have written a short second line? Think about its content. (*Sample answer: The short second line stresses that this is not what the poem's speaker believes. **Some** say the world will end in **ice**, but the **speaker** thinks it will end in **fire**.*)

QUICK CHECK. Ask students to scan the rest of the poem on their own. Then ask the following questions:

But if | it had | to perish twice,
I think | I know | enough | of hate
To say | that for | destruction ice
Is also great
And would | suffice.

- What is the meter of these lines? (*iambic*)
- Which lines have fewer feet? (*The last two lines have two feet.*)
- How do fewer feet in these lines affect the poem's meaning? (*Sample answer: The fewer feet emphasize the end of the poem, perhaps mimicking the world ending. They make the tone lighter and strangely cheerier as the "world" ends.*)

Practice and Apply

Practice activities for **rhythm** and **meter** appear on pp. 169–170.

- Assign **Practice Worksheet A** to students who need more structured activities.
- Assign **Practice Worksheet B** to grade-level and above-level students.

Answer Key: Practice Worksheet A

1. check that a (i~) rhythm is marked throughout the poem. 2. b 3. a 4. b

Answer Key: Practice Worksheet B

1. a
2. d
3. a
4. Sample answer: Most students should respond that the tone is somber and dark.
5. Sample answer: The last line, which has only three feet, ends in a downward note, reinforcing the gloomy tone.

Assess and Reteach

Use these guidelines to determine if students need the **Reteaching Worksheet**.

Practice Worksheet A: Students should identify the correct answer for all five items.

Practice Worksheet B: Students should correctly answer numbers 1–3. Students should be able to support their answers for 4 and 5.

For students who need reteaching, review the Student **Lesson Summary**. Focus on the examples, and relate them to the definitions. Brainstorm one or two new examples with students. Then have them complete the **Reteaching Worksheet**, p. 171.

Answer Key: Reteaching Worksheet

On the dusty earth-drum
Beats the falling rain;
Now a whispered murmur,
Now a louder strain.
Slender, silvery drumsticks,
On an ancient drum,
Beat the mellow music
Bidding life to come.

Chords of earth awakened,
Notes of greening spring,
Rise and fall triumphant
Over every thing.
Slender, silvery drumsticks
Beat the long tattoo—
God, the Great Musician,
Calling life anew.

- 1.
2. b
3. d
4. c